

A NEW DIESEL VEHICLE

Self-confessed *Dungeons & Dragons* player Vin Diesel leapt at the chance to play an immortal character in the new fantasy adventure **THE LAST WITCH HUNTER**.

Vin Diesel's filmography encompasses most genres, but *The Last Witch Hunter* is the actor's first foray into fantasy.

In addition to producing the film, Diesel plays Kaulder, a warrior and witch-hunter who, in the 13th Century, was cursed with immortality by the Queen Witch shortly before he killed her. Forced to witness the death of his loved ones as he outlived them, Kaulder is made to walk the earth for 800 years – until the present day, when the Queen Witch returns seeking revenge.

An avid *Dungeons & Dragons* player, Diesel reveals it was his love of the role-playing game that initially drew him to the project.

"It's something that was a big part of my life and it's probably affected the way I approach making movies and producing movies," he says. "It definitely played a huge part in this; I haven't done anything in the fantasy genre [before].

"The initial thing that attracted me to this

movie was this play on immortality. And we're not the first to do it. If you've read *The Silmarillion*, or know anything about what *The Silmarillion* is, it's Tolkien's initiation into his secondary world. The key theme for him is immortality, and that's something we play with here. He taints the Elves with immortality and simultaneously taints them with this sorrow at this melancholy existence."

While some perceive immortality as a blessing, as far as Diesel's character is concerned, it's a curse.

"You see what it would be like if you were immortal and you had to constantly say goodbye to everyone you love, what that may feel like. The need to find something significant to live for – those are the themes of the movie," he explains.

"Do we all play with the fantasy of immortality? Sure. If any of us get sick... do we

wish that our parents could be immortal? Sure. But as a mythology, the concept of immortality for this character is something that he has to struggle with, and it's something that's been literally a curse in his life."

Diesel notes that having an astrologer mother and a love of fantasy allows him to keep an open mind when it comes to the supernatural.


"Anyone that really plays *Dungeons & Dragons* is going to be open-minded. Anybody that really buys into Tolkien's secondary world is going to have a great imagination. If I refused to believe in anything, I don't know if my imagination would service me in the way that it has done."

Kaulder's changing appearance throughout the movie, designed to convey the impression he has lived through the centuries, was also something that appealed to Diesel.

"One of the reasons why the director [Breck Eisener] didn't want me to train in the gym every day was because he felt that a character who originated in the 13th Century... there were no gyms then! They can look strong, but they can look a little bit more everyman. He has so many different looks... it really does feel as though he's from a different time."

Diesel hints that the adventures of Kaulder will continue, with the character's journey through time providing the impetus for a follow-up.

"It's something that's probably the most fun about this mythology; and something that will be further explored in *The Axe and Cross*, the sequel to [*The Last Witch Hunter*].

"Casting Elijah Wood and Rose Leslie and Michael Caine was all in service of branching out this mythology," he adds. "I think what people will find when they see this movie is that there is so much more, as Rose Leslie's character declares."  — *THESEB HARRIS*

• *The Last Witch Hunter* is out Feb 3

DVD&BD

“You see what it would be like if you were immortal...”

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